1973

Oral History Interview: James F. Summers and Ivy B. Summers

James F. Summers

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY
HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25701
JAMES E. MORROW LIBRARY
ASSOCIATES

ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, Ivy B. Summers, the undersigned, of Walton, County of Roane State of West Virginia, grant, convey, and transfer to the James E. Morrow Library Associates, a division of the Marshall University Foundation, Inc., an educational and eleemosynary institution, all my right, title, interest, and literary property rights in and to my testimony recorded on Nov. 4, 1973, to be used for scholarly purposes, including study rights to Reproduction.

_____ Open and usable after my review
initial

_____ Closed for a period of _____ years.
initial

_____ Closed for my lifetime.
initial

_____ Closed for my lifetime unless special permission.
initial

Date November 4, 1973 — Ivy B. Summers
(Signature - Interviewee)

_____
Address

Date November 4, 1973 — Wilma J. Graham
(Signature - Witness)

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY
JAMES E. MORROW LIBRARY
HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25701
ASSOCIATES

452

ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, James F. Summers, the undersigned, of Walton, County of Roane State of West Virginia, grant, convey, and transfer to the James E. Morrow Library Associates, a division of the Marshall University Foundation, Inc., an educational and eleemosynary institution, all my right, title, interest, and literary property rights in and to my testimony recorded on Nov. 4, 1973, to be used for scholarly purposes, including study rights to Reproduction.

_____ Open and usable after my review
initial

_____ Closed for a period of _____ years.
initial

_____ Closed for my lifetime.
initial

_____ Closed for my lifetime unless special permission.
initial

Date November 4, 1973 J. F. Summers
(Signature - Interviewee)

_____
Address

Date November 4, 1973 Wilma J. Graham
(Signature - Witness)

This is an interview with

Mr. James F. Summers and
Mrs. Ivy B. Summers of
Walton, West Virginia

By

Wilma Graham

Interviewer: I am Wilma Graham, and I'm interviewing Mr. and Mrs. James F. Summers of Walton, West Virginia on November 4, 1973. Mr. Summers, can you tell me where you were born and when and tell me a little bit about your childhood days?

Mr. Summers: I was born at Alum Branch, in Kanawha County, West Virginia, in 1891.

Interviewer: Can you tell me something about your childhood?

Mr. Summers: I had a pretty rough row to hoe, and the first doctor I ever had, left me a cripple for life which you can see that. (Mr. Summer's left arm is much smaller than his right, and he can use it very little.) I'm afraid of doctors. What else do you want ? I went to a one-room school, called Straight Creek, all eight grades, and I went there and would have graduated from the eighth grade there but they didn't have any graduation in those days; you just moved up to the next higher book. I went to the Summer Normal School they called it and I took the Uniform Examination and got my certificate. I didn't have any high school work at that time.

Interviewer: OK! Mrs. Summers can you tell me where you were born and when, and then tell me a little bit about your schooling?

Mrs. Summers: I was born in Roane County, in Matty in, I was born in January, January 27, 1895. I went to Cicerone School a while and then I went to Ashby school in Jackson County a while. Our home was near the Jackson County line, so I spent quite a good bit of time in Jackson County schools, and completed the eithth grade. I had an uncle that was a teacher that I especially liked, Wood Taylor and he was also a member of the Legislature during a term or two and I don't remember just the date, and I also took the Uniform examination and got a certificate to start teaching. We both started teaching in 1912, but not in the same school.

Interviewer: Can you tell me something about your first school?

Mr: Well it was an old school house with no conveniences whatever. I had to build my own teacher's desk and it was pretty. I didn't stay there straight through the eight terms, but I taught there eight terms.

Interviewer: Where was this school?

Mr.: Cicerone.

Mrs. I started teaching in Jackson County at the Ashby school, the one that I had gone to school to for several years. I started teaching in 1912, in fact we both started teaching in 1912.

Interviewer: Was it a one-room school?

Mrs. Yes, it was a one-room school, about like the one he started teaching in, no conveniences; we burned wood for heat most of the time. No electricity or any conveniences that way at all, not at that time.

Interviewer: Can you remember anything exciting or anything outstanding that happened then?

Mr.: I went to Malden and taught up there one year. It was a bad school, too, and I didn't want to go back there the next year, and I came back to Cicerone, didn't I?

Mrs.: Yes, but you didn't tell anything about teaching at Malden though.

Mr.: Huh?

Mrs.: You taught a term at Malden.

Mr. That's what I said, I taught a term at Malden.

Mrs. (She explains that it was a one room school) It had all eight grades, it was a grade school, you see there. Yes,--he taught 5th and 6th grades. I didn't teach at the Malden school, I taught at a one-room school up on Georges Creek from Malden that winter in the year 1917 and 18. I had about a mile to walk to school and creeks to cross and so on. It was a one room school, just about like all other one-room schools.

Interviewer: What was the community like?

Mrs. It was a fairly nice community. I got along well and it was a nice little school.

Mr. Buck Groves' mother-in-law came from there.

Interviewer: From Malden?

Mr. Now, I went back to Cicerone.

Interviewer: Can you tell me anything about your school, that you thought was interesting?

Mr.: The longer I taught the more attached to them I got and the more they would work for me. The school where I taught the eight terms, there at Cicerone in rotation--Out of the group that I had there at the first school I taught, I had several teachers turned out there. That's what I worked for to turn them out as teachers. She's one of my school girls. (points to Mrs. Summers)

Mrs.: I went to school to him a while.

Mr.: She taught 31 years.

Mrs. He taught 45 years besides summer Normal School.

Mr.: I taught 45 years besides teaching Summer Normals. I taught several terms and the first college I ever went to--took work to was that one that is New River State now, but wasn't called that then.

Mrs.: It was New River State then. (They are talking about what is now West Virginia Tech.)

Mr.: And I taught between schooling--terms at the colleges. The second college I had was Glenville; Glenville State Teacher's College. The third one was Morris Harvey. That's where I finished up. Now do you want to know how many children we've got? One of them is retired now--a retired teacher. He taught 41 years and I taught 45. I wanted to keep ahead of him. We taught several years, Oh, I expect 20 years in the same building at the same time. I was her principal. Next Sunday, no the 17th--the 16th of this month, (November) will make us 60 years together. You don't want to hear that, do you? I taught up here at Walton, I taught at Gandeeville, that's in Roane County, that's all I taught in Roane County, ten years. I went to Kanawha County and taught in the city of Pinch. You know where that is, don't you. (ha) We taught there four years, went to Elkview and taught one year, and then went from there to Bowers. We had a lot of this as our own intentions, not that we couldn't get the same schools again, we wanted to change around. We went to Bowers, didn't we? Bowers school, B-o-w-e-r-s, I'll spell it for you. It was right above Charleston, at a place called Ettawall. It is torn down now.

Mrs.: We left Winifred out entirely. That was earlier than Bowers.

Mr.: I taught at Mink Shoales, one year at Mink Shoales--what year was that?

Mrs.: About 1933 or 4(cane raked against table). Then you went to Middle Fork, maybe you went to upper Pinch.

Mr. Politics played a big part--they sent me to a school they thought I wouldn't like. I stayed right with it--they left her out because she belonged to my party. I'm telling it straight! Mrs. Goodall was the Superintendent, too.

Mrs.: Shoo-o

Mr.: I divided my time and had some of the upper grades to help out. They sit down and helped some of them out in the smaller grades. I did that a lot. If I didn't, one of them would eat the other one up. (He's talking about dividing his time between classes.)

Interviewer: Did you have recess--and how long was that?

Mr.: Fifteen minutes.

Interviewer: What did they do at recess:

Mr.: I didn't follow them around. I think they all maybe went to the bathroom, and at noon they all took a good exercise. They had their exercise, too, at recess.

Mrs.: I taught my first term at the Ashby School, in Jackson County. It was the school I had gone to, you know, for several years. We got along about as usual, I suppose. I had all eight grades. The second school was called Camp Creek. It was in--in, let's see--it was in Kanawha County, and the second one was in Kanawha County, and I got along right well there, I think I had about 60 enrolled in a one-room building. I boarded with a Mr. Jones. He was a country preacher; I had a very nice place to board and they had very nice children. They were all very nice children and that was the winter that I got married. It will be 60 years the 16th of this month. He ended his school earlier than I did mine and he finished my school, about a month after his was out; they allowed him to finish my school because I had to walk quite a distance to the school, and we saw several of our pupils here just a week or two ago that went to that school 60 years ago this fall and winter so part of them remembered us. Some of them remembered us yet--people up in their 70's.

Mr.: We saw them at a funeral.

Mrs. And then, the next school, I didn't teach then for a year or two, but the next school was at Georges Creek school, you know, near Malden. He taught in the grade school that fall and I taught at the Georges Creek School. Well then there was another lull for me; I didn't teach for--I didn't teach any more then for three or four years. After we came back from Malden, I think he went back to Cicerone a year or two, and then our girl, our second child was born in 1918. And he taught the Walton School, we lived in Walton then, taught the Walton school in 1918 and 1919, and went on to Gandeeville and taught 1919and 20, and I'm getting off on his, but I wasn't teaching then. And then, I started back to teaching and in 1921, I made my First Grade Certificate that year. I went back and taught the same school that I taught at first in Jackson County. That was 1921 and 22, and then in the fall of 1922, we moved to Winifred, up in the Cabin Creek District. We taught two terms--that was our first place we taught together. It had three rooms, and he taught, I think, several of the eighth--you know they went to the eighth grade and several of them, and some of them could go to East Bank, I think it was, to the Junior High if they preferred to do that, but several stayed at the grade school. We taught two years there, and then came back to Cicerone and he taught Cicerone again in 1924 and 25 and I taught at the Ashby School again. I might have called it some-

thing else a while ago--it was the Ashby School again. He taught Cicerone and I taught the Ashby School, then we moved. We left that section of the country, and came to Pinch in 1927, and we both taught together in the Pinch School--it was just a two-room school for four years. He taught to the eighth grade there, although you know they started the Elkview High--they had organized the Elkview High along about 1924 or 25, I think. Some of them went up there, you know--to junior high in the seventh grade. We taught at the Elkview Grade then, one year, 1931 and 32, and then we went to the Bowers School and taught a year there. It was a three-room building. Then that's when--he said something a while ago about politics or something. Anyway I was left off--it was during the depression and all, and they did leave out some of the teachers, especially where there was more than one in the family and I didn't teach--

Mr.: Only the ones that was in their party.

Mrs.: Anyway, you got a school. Anyway then they gave me a school in Poca District, known as Frog's Creek School. After my three years lay off there, and I taught two terms out there in a one-room building, and I think that was my last one-room building I taught in. And then, we went from--he taught in a school--Point Harmony the last year I taught at Frog's Creek. From there, we moved back to Dutch Ridge to the O'Dell School and that was a two-room building, and we taught there for four years, and then from there to Frame--no, he went from there to Frame. We were separated then awhile, I taught a term at Three-Mile School, Ethel Jarrett was principal up there and then I taught a term at Mill Creek, it was a two-room school and what was the Matheney's name?

Mr.: Fritz

Mrs.: Fritz Matheney was the principal over there, and then I got to go to Frame for about two years.

Mr.: We got back together.

Mrs.: Then from Frame, I think we went to Leatherwood, well it was the Blundon School.

Mr.: "Yell"

Mrs. We taught four years there, and then from the Blundon School we went to the Baxter School, or I mean I'm talking about myself mostly. He was along, we taught three years there and I retired from that school, but he taught four more years, but I didn't teach anymore. We retired in 1953, but he went on and taught four more years, but that was my last term.

Mr.: They needed some more principals and I fit in with one room.

Mrs.: And I retired--I was eligible for 90 percent--You know retirement and I retired, but he taught four more years, and he taught one term in Florida, and he finished up in a one-room building. He wanted it that way. Because he started out in a one-room building, he wanted to finish in a one-room building.

Mr.: And I did.

Mrs.: He taught at the Indian Creek School for his last term. Now I skipped a good little bit, you see, I didn't teach as long as he did, but he didn't miss a term from the time he started teaching--didn't miss a term from the time he started teaching until he retired and we started the same year, but I didn't teach for aroung ten years during that time that I didn't teach. I quit at 31 years. As far as the method of teaching, I guess we started out the A,B,C Method, with the beginners. We didn't put in during that time, our two children. They both, they went to school--our son didn't have any other teacher except his father and mother until he started high school in the ninth grade, and our daughter, well she was just about the same, too--wasn't she?

Mr.: She made her diploma.

Mrs.: She made her diploma and went on to the ninth grade then, and so they couldn't come home and complain about their teachers. Of course, we weren't always in the same school, maybe our son would go with him, and our daughter would go with me when we were still teaching in one-room buildings there for a while. Now our son has retired from teaching after 41 years, so we're not very young anymore. But now that's not much on the teaching profession, I mean as far as the work we did. Oh, we've had doctors and lawyers, teachers, and one thing or another.

Interviewer: Something I would still like to know--could you tell me something about how the rooms were furnished? Did you work on bulletin boards when you first started, can you think of anything about your room, did it have blackboards?

Mr.: It had blackboards, wooden--just painted walls at first. The first school that I taught in, the one I taught eight terms, I bought the blackboard for it, paid for it with "pie supper money."

Interviewer: Paid for it with what?

Mr.: Pie supper money.

Interviewer: What's a pie supper?

Mr. Didn't you ever hear of a pie supper? Well they, the people of the community would want me to announce a pie supper. Then they would bring pies there and some man would buy a girl's pie and they would go sit down and eat it.

Mrs.: They had to bid on them. Didn't they auction them off?

Mr.: Huh?

Mrs. They auctioned them off, didn't they?

Mr.: "Yell"--they did after a while, but they didn't at first.

Mrs.: It was a fun get-together, but yet it was one good way to make a little extra money.

Mr.: You're going to have to send her to school. (referring to interviewer) Do you know what a box supper is?

Interviewer: No, what is a box supper?

Mr. A box supper is where they fix a whole meal in a box, something like a shoe box, and they bring it there and sell it for so much at the school at nights, and the people around there would come. They wouldn't eat any supper, but would come there and buy their supper. That way the school had a little money.

Interviewer: The box was donated to the school?

Mr.: "Yell," donated by the people.

Mrs.: Usually the youngsters, a boy would want a certain girl's box, well he would buy that. He would pay a little higher than somebody else, and he would get to eat dinner with her.

Mr.: Buy a box, the name was on the box and the boy would get to eat with that girl.

Interviewer: Did he know whose box he was buying?

Mr.: Yes, I did.

Interviewer: Whay type of recitation did you have? Did you have a place in the front of the room where they had their lessons?

Mr.: Had seats up there for that purpose. Stand up when they read.

Interviewer: Did you have things like spelling bees in school then?

Mr.: Oh! yes. Then they stood up until they had a real spelling match. Then they had their recitation seat around that way, (Made a circle with his cane). When they had a match, they sat on two sides, the leader would choose, each one of them, a choice of what was left.

Mrs. Sometimes they spelled two and two. They called that a circle, you know--

Mr.: "Yell," sometimes they spelled that way.

Mrs.: Especially the ones in the higher grade in a one-room building, always liked the geography races and matches and things like that, maybe in different subjects. It seemed like geography was the one they preferred.

Mr.: In a geography race, you got up there and see who could find it first on a map. Find a certain place. That was pretty good practice.

Mrs.: They picked sides, they were on different sides, there you know.

Mr.: Do you want to know what kinds of games they played now? They played marble, and what was the name of that with the little holes around? Shoot the marble and it would go in the hole.

Mrs.: I don't know if that's mumbley peg or not.

Mr.: OH! "rolley hole."

Mrs. Mumbley peg was with a knife wasn't it, or something? I don't know how it was. At noon they played ball, played base.

Mr.: Base ball, had good games of ball.

Mrs.: And ring around the rosey, and yell, drop the handkerchief. That was a good game.

Mr.: Too slow

Mrs.: They had ciphering matches and that was right interesting, as well as spelling matches. They always liked to have something a little different on maybe a Friday afternoon.

Interviewer: What was a ciphering match?

Mrs.: Well, that was similar to the spelling, only they would, only they would, you know, it would be mathematics, you know--the two from the opposite side--the teacher would call out maybe the addition and subtraction or whatever they happened to have it in, and then the winner, and the other one had to sit down and the next one came up, just the same, nearly as spelling.

Mr.: That one could go clear around all of them on the other side.
Mrs.: He could beat them all.

Mr.: It is fun. (to interviewer) you'll learn how to teach school, won't you?

(As the tape was being turned over, Mr. and Mrs. Summers started telling how they started the hot lunch program in Kanawha County.)

Mrs.: Do you want me to go ahead and tell it?

Mr.: "Yell"

Mrs.: One child would bring something, maybe a can of tomatoes, maybe a jar of tomatoes or something, another maybe would bring a few potatoes, maybe another one would bring a piece of bacon or something like that and then a little head of cabbage and the ones that brought something got their lunch, maybe for a day or two, or something free, and the ones that didn't furnish anything would just pay a nickle, and the ones that paid the nickle, you know, we could buy, we could buy the bread and the crackers and things like that, and our menu was mostly, maybe it would be soup one day and beans or something, maybe the next day and,

Mr.: Mr. Faust happened to come down one day and saw what we was into and went up and organized it up at the high school. (Mr. Faust was principal at Elkview High School at the time).

Mrs.: It was, we had a little hot plate stove, you know, a little stove that sit up on legs, it was a little hot plate and there was two or three of the girls would get the food ready, of course, I kinda supervised things partly, and then, of course, it was soup and crackers and maybe then we would have our beans and maybe some of them ould bring onions or something, and our bread then another day. A dish of beans and a slice or two of bread, so that was the beginning at Pinch and then we went from Pinch to Elkview and we had a little kitchen there. Well, the teachers took turns--the lady teachers took turns, you know, at preparing and then, of course, some would furnish and some would just pay a certain amount. It was maybe increased to a dime or so and in that way we could go ahead and then serve something different, of course, just the staples was the main thing. So that was sorta the beginning of it.

Mr.: The one's who didn't bring the potatoes and things like that would bring their nickles to pay, wouldn't they? Couldn't get one for a nickle now, could you?

Mrs.: They all seemed to enjoy that, you know, much better than just bringing their cold sandwiches, or their sandwiches or whatever they would bring. Back years ago, the children in one room schools, they were almost on starvation, some of them. They would get around and ask other children for food, you know. Most of them would divide it with them, and give them something.

Mr. That was what got me more than anything else. Some of them were so needy. Tell them about the O'Dell School out on Dutch Ridge. She used to make sandwiches and bring out there and give to a family. We didn't have very much to go on.

Mrs.: Well now the way that was, there was a family there, and they had they were nice people, good folks, and he was out of work and they didn't have things to fix lunch for the children, and one boy, he didn't want from this school. Well, we took lunch for him for about six weeks, I think, and he appreciated it and we did the same thing at Coopers Creek. There was a family, oh, he was kinda

blind, partly blind or something of the sorts, and on relief, that was later, you know, and they would run out before their month was up for their next pay check or their next relief check or whatever they got. We took for them several weeks, three or four of them, four or five of them. We had to kinda--even if it was peanut butter and bologna and so on.

Mr.: They didn't know how to manage.

Mrs.: Yes, they were poor managers. When they would get their relief check, they would just buy fancy foods, you know, instead of buying more substantial foods and lasting foods, and then they would run out.

Interviewer: Did these children usually finish school?

Mrs.: I don't think they did, I kinda lost out on some of them after we left there and some of them might have done very well, but I don't think they amounted to very much. Of course, sometimes there will be an exception, you know.

Mr.: You know the Scott family there in Pinch, don't you? They were awful good to help in the hot lunch program and the--oh, there were several of them around there, the women at home helped.

Mrs.: Yes, Pinch was always a good place. They were always ready to take a part.

Mr.: Pinch is a good town, and it's growing, too, isn't it?

Mrs.: They were pretty good at Elkview. Well most the- well, now we didn't have too much cooperation at Leatherwood, did we? Not too much. We didn't have hot lunch there, did we?

Mr.: No

Mrs.: I don't think we did.

Mr.: We talked about it, but we saw it wouldn't do.

Mrs.: Well we taught at Leatherwood, it's really the Blundon School. They don't have school there anymore, you see, they don't have one at Yukon or several of those places.

Interviewer: Were these people farmers or what?

Mrs.: You mean?

Interviewer: In the school's community.

Mrs.: Some of them were, and a lot of them worked at the plants, you know, duPont and Carbide.

Mr.: Some of them worked in oil fields.

Mrs.: Around Pinch, of course, a lot of them worked in oil fields. And when we had that depression that started about 1929, I reckon along there, that was hard on people, you know. We got along pretty well, but it pinched us pretty much. Most of them made the best of it.

(Mr. Summers tells how he was always willing to move to a new school after teachingat one place for a year, because he wanted to teach in different places and he didn't realize it would be a disadvantage to him later)

Mr.: I didn't have sense enough to see what they were doing to me. The first thing they do is look to see how many terms when you go to a new place, like if you'd go to Ohio to teach school, they'd look at your record to see whether you had taught school more than one term at a certain place, at one place. If you did just teach one there and go to another one, they look at it that way that you're not good. That time that I taught at Cicerone helped me out when I went to Florida. You see if you change every year, and go to another school, the next year, they think you're not much good or you wouldn't have to be getting away every year.

Interviewer: How long were your school terms?

Mr.: Started in at six months.

Interviewer: What w as the purpose of having such a short term?
Mr.: Huh:

Interviewer: Why did you have such a short term?

Mr.: That's all the allocation that was made.

Interviewer: Did you do anything in the summer?

Mr.: Me? I farmed. Raised corn bread and potatoes.

(Interviewer asked how much he made a month when he started teaching, and he answered $35 a month in 1912.)

Mr.: Last school I taught, I made $401 a month and didn't get near as rich as I did when I made $35.

Interviewer? How long did you get $35 a month? Did that salary stay pretty stable for a while?

Mr.: Several terms, I can't remember just exactally. Several terms though, I got $35 a month.

Interviewer: Then it gradually went up?

Mr.: No, it didn't go up.

Interviewer: Did you get an increment each year? For each year you taught, were you given an increment?

Mr.: Just started in bare handed and came out bare handed. Still it did pretty well to keep us. Together with both of us working, we made $70. She had to quit though to raise a family, and I had to keep her.

Interviewer: Did they take anything out of that $35 a month?

Mr.: No, no. You got every bit of it. The whole check.

Interviewer: You didn't have any social security or anything then?

Mr.: No. If you had insurance, you had to buy it extra. I didn't buy any insurance until 1924, and I've had it paid up for 20 years now, and I don't know where it is.

Mrs. My second school was in Kanawha County, and there wasn't any difference in the pay then, of course, that was our second year, but I never taught a school in, I was born and reared in Roane County, but never taught a school in Roane County. I taught four in Jackson County and 27, I guess, in Kanawha County.

Interviewer: Was the salary more in Jackson County?

Mrs.: No, it was the same at that time. That was for a Second Grade Certificate. You know we started teaching on Second Grade Certificates and he made his First Grade Certificate in 1916, was it, when did you make your First Grade Certificate?

Mr.: "Yell" in 1916.

Mrs.: 1916

Mr.: That was the Uniform Examination, you know they--you had to get'em.

Mrs.: You had to get an average. You see on twelve subjects. You took the examination on twelve subjects.

Mr.: A Second Grade would last three years, a Third Grade lasted one year, that made four years, and I had to do something to get my certificate.

Mrs.: Well, a First Grade Certificate would last five years.

Mr.: Then you could renew it.

Mrs.: Then you could renew it and if you teach as much as three years on it, you know, during the five if you were eligible to have it renewed. I didn't make my First Grade Certificate until 1921. We didn't finish our high school until--when? About 1930, when we got our diplomas, didn't we?

Mr.: "unhuh"

Mrs.: I don't know how many years we had taught. We would have to kinda figure up to see.

Mr.: You see then, you could--M. D. Shawkey was the State Superintendent. He was from Pennsylvania and he patterned the schools after Pennsylvania, and he got these Uniform Examinations up and I tell you, anyone could take, could pass the Uniform Examination was plenty able for a high school graduate.

Mrs.: Well, Mr. Faust, you know, was at Elkview when we went over, and he gave us credit for--Oh, I dont know how many subjects, and then he gave us work and we would go up every once and a while and he gave us night work and contract work and all, that way we worked up to where we could get our diplomas because we weren't suppose to, we couldn't enter college without our high school diploma, and we got our diplomas the same year Clair got his and then he finished, and both children finished, but--well Bernice didn't at first.

Mr.: "Yell", both children got their Master's Degree.

Mrs.: I only have about, I only got about one year of college, that is all I have. We just couldn't all. We just had to do the best we could, cause that was along about that depression time, along about the time of the depression and everything, and it was pretty rough on us.

Mr.: All I can say is I made a, have a degree, but not a Master's.

Interviewer: How have the methods changed?

Mr.: Huh?

Interviewer: How have the methods changed?

Mr.: That's another thing I don't know.

Interviewer: Well, how did you teach?

Mr.: I taught school. Just whatever was needed. I taught in the Summer Schools, Summer Normals, they called them, I taught them in a form that they could bury some of that in there, (points to his head) and pass the Uniform Examination.

Interviewer: How did your math differ from the math today?

Mr.: Well, I couldn't tell you. I never did bother with it today, but I do know there is a lot of difference, still mine will make it.

Mrs. Now he or I will figure interest or anything a little bit different, I mean figuring up anything we figure it a little bit different, although it's the same, it comes out the same, but I think I use the older method yet, you know, back the earlier method.

Interviewer: How many subjects did you have a day in a one-room school? Just reading?

Mrs.: Oh, we had just about all the primary--to the eighth grade?

Mr.: Eighth grade had about ten subjects.

Mrs.: Reading and math, and spelling and health and geography, history,

Mr.: Agriculture

Mrs.: Agriculture, and writing of course, and I think I named spelling.

Mr.: Spelling, did you name it?

Mrs.: "Yell," I think so.

Mr.: Physiology

Mrs.: That was health.

Mr.: "Yell"

Mrs. Called it physiology, you know, back years ago, but it was health. English,

Mr.: Civil government

Mrs.: Civil government, there must be...

Mr.: State history, and United States history.

Mrs.: That was through the seventh and eighth grades, you see. Let's see, what--now what subject was it we had to pass the examination, take an examination on that we didn't teach in the grade schools? Seems to me like there was one.

Mr.: I tasn't bookkeeping?

Mrs.: We didn't have to take that, the examination on bookkeeping.

Mr.: You didn't, but I did. The first one I took had it on it.

Mrs.: Years ago we had that mental, we had the regular arithmetic and then we had mental arithmetic.

Interviewer: What is mental arithmetic?

Mrs.: That's where you have to figure it out in your head.

Interviewer: You didn't work the problem on paper?

Mrs.: Oh, yes you could, but ...

Mr.: You couldn't use a pencil or a paper.

Mrs.: You wasn't suppose to

Mr.: or even a piece of chalk, you had to do it mentally. I can give you one--I can ask you one question on mental arithmetic. How would you write 30 if the scale were 5?

Interviewer: I don't know.

Mrs.: You had better tell her how.

Mr. Well the scale now, you know what the scale is now, don't you?

Interviewer: Ten?

Mr.: Ten, "yell." To get to 30, you have to go higher--30 the scale by 5. Ten would be 3 times that, 6 times--it would be 6.

Interviewer: How did you work that out though? Was that mental arithmetic?

Mr.: That is mental arithmetic, "yell."

Interviewer: How did you work it out?

Mr. Well, the way we write 30 now, you know how that is, 3 times 10, 10 is the number we have to work from to get 30 with 5. You have to multiply by 6.

Mrs.: Now wonder if you can tell me right off, I think he can, maybe you can, too. What's a third and a half of a third of 10?

Interviewer: I don't know.

Mrs. You don't know what a third and a half a third of 10 would be--it would be 5.

Interviewer: It would be 5. Is that mental arithmetic?

Mrs.: "Yell"

Mr.: I've taught school to teachers, and they would just sit up there and sweat and couldn't work them out.

Interviewer: Would you ask your teachers these questions?

Mrs.: He wouldn't ask them anything that much, I don't think he ever bothered to ask teachers that when you taught the normal, the schools.

Mr.: No

Mrs.: Normal school was more or less just a review school, there you know; being prepared to pass the Uniform Examination.

Mr.: You see we had two, we had Brooks Mental Arithmetic and it was a hard one, it was more advanced than Lippincotts. Lippincotts was the one recommended for schools, you know, that is before they did away with it and took up practical arithmetic. Algebra is more advanced, get along alright with it, I learned a whole lot about algebra just by myself, but I don't know anything about it now.

Interviewer: Did you teach algebra in the eighth grade?

Mrs.: No, we used to have the old Ray's Third Arithmetic book when we were children.

Interviewer: Ray's Third Arithmetic? What kind of arithmetic is that?

Mr.: Well, it goes up to the eighth grade, maybe higher.

Mrs.: Mathematics

Mr.: What is the name of this last arithmetic we studied?

Mrs.: I don't know.

Mr.: It wasn't Hamilton's. We had a Hamilton's arithmetic.

Interviewer: How did the students get to school, by bus?

Mrs.: No, they never heard of a bus at that time. They all had to walk, I mean to the country schools.

Mr.: How old are you?

Mrs.: Just about all of them had to walk. We went to the--the first school I went to, the river was in the way and Poca River is a pretty good size little stream, you know, and they had a foot-log to cross on, and unless we had heavy rains and high water and then we had to depend on somebody putting us across in a boat and, you know that made it very inconvenient for the children who lived on the opposite side of the river. And then we, my father had us transferred from Roane County to Jackson County because we could get to the Jackson County school without having to cross so much water.

Mr.: Clair and I walked to Cicerone. He went to school up there when I taught there, and we waded one creek waist deep to me, and I had to hold his hand as we went over, and I was a good swimmer. One time , crossing the creek at Cicerone, right below the school house was a river called Poca. One morning there was a frost and ice on the bridge, and a boy by the name of Clair Harper was in the group of us, he was going along slinging his dinner pail, you know his feet flew from under him and off that bridge, 30 feet to the water and then the river had over 6 feet of new water in it. Well, I dropped my belongings on the foot bridge and I jumped over, and I heard a splash and looked around and there was

Clair; it was winter time and Clair had jumped in and got the boy's cap, and I got hold of the boy and took him out. But that boy's father had saved me one time.

Interviewer: How?

Mr.: In water.

Mrs.: From drowning. Now there was a wet bunch of fellows that had to get around the stove at the school that morning, I guess.

Mr.: "Yell," the ones that got wet had to stay in.

Mrs.: Now you'd think that they, you know, when something like that happened, no dry clothes or anything to change, I'll tell you it was rough.

Mr.: A group of men, able bodied men, standing over there looking like hound dogs. They wouldn't try, go in and get him.

Interviewer: Who kept the fires going in the schools?

Mr.: All of us did after the fire was built. They always had a janitor to build the fire and sweep the floors.

Interviewer: Did they keep the fire going all night?

Mr.: Oh, no.

Mrs.: Back in the early days, most of the heat was wood. They had to burn wood.

(Mrs. Summers tells about pie socials to make money for the school.)

They would pay 5 cents a guess to guess what kind of pie it was, and they would make a good bit extra that way, and maybe have a cake walk. You've heard of cake walks haven't you?

Interviewer: Yes

Mr.: Sometimes they would make about as much money that way as they would selling the pies. Usually the pie was held up and they would bid on it. The pie and the plate. They bid on the pie, and of course, they had to give the plate back. The pie would go to according to what girl's it was.

Mrs.: The boys may run it up on another one you know, if he wanted a certain pie.

I

Interviewer: They didn't buy it by the kind of pie, but who brought it?

Mrs.: "Yell," that was it. That was the way it was sold.

Mr.: They usually had pies that you like.

Mrs.: Then the guess pie, you know they would make that out of something very unusual. So long as it was something that would be pretty hard for them to guess.

Interviewer: What type of discipline did you have? Were you allowed to spank children when you taught school?

Mr.: Oh "yell."

Mrs.: Oh, yes in the early days.

Mr.: You could punish them.

Mrs.: Punish them someway, spank them or switch them, or there were different ways to punish them.

Mr.: Use a switch on them just so you didn't cut the blood out of them.

Interviewer: Did you ever have any trouble with parents over it?

Mr.: I had one fellow to come to the school house on me one morning about his granddaughter, and I just took him by the shoulder and led him out.

Mrs.: I had a little trouble, well I really didn't have any trouble, but it scared me. I switched a boy, he was a pretty mean little fellow, and oh, I gave him a pretty good little switching with just a common switch, I reckon, and it was his stepfather, and he raised a pretty big rukus and tried to get, have me arrested but he didn't. They didn't get it pulled, they didn't arrest me, but it worried me and you know, it kinda frightened me. That was my second school.

Mr.: That was when I finished it for her.
Mrs.: That's when he finished the school for me, it wasn't on that, you know, I had punished the boy earlier in the year. He behaved pretty well after that.

Mr.: You know, Wilma, I lived in Walton and walked to Gandeeville, six and one-half miles there, and six and one-half miles back. That winter I walked 1,440 miles. I stayed over there five nights.

Mrs.: Tell her the rest of it. (laughs) That was the winter--go ahead.

Mr.: When I started walking over there, I weighed 148 pounds. I was a nice made man and when I came out, I weighed 200 and never have got down.

Interviewer: What happened?

Mr.: I ate four times a day.

Mrs.: And had plenty of exercise, I guess is what and eating food--food and exercise. I mean he did eat four times a day. Get up , eat a good breakfast fairly early and I always packed a

good lunch for him and then have his meal ready when he got in in the evening about 6 o'clock, and then he loafed over in Walton and visit and loaf around until about 9:30 and come home and eat again before he went to bed. That did it!

Interviewer: Tell me the rest of it.

Mrs.: Well, I didn't think he was going to tell you about picking up the weight.

Mrs.: In later years they didn't go for that punishing, so very much, but there's so many different ways you can punish children and it would hurt them worse than a paddling or something. I had a little boy one there, he wasn't really retarded, but maybe a little bit, he was a mean little fellow and I hated to do anything to him much. I was awful busy and he had been into something and I brought him up to my desk and I had one of those little ping pong paddles, and I told him I was busy and have him to hold that a little bit and he took the paddle and stood there and held it and you could see the poor little old fellow looked like he was shaking. So then after I got through with whatever it was, I told him that I thought that was enough. I didn't think I would have to use it on him. Now that there punished him as much, better, more than if I had really paddled him. Then you can make them take a little old ping pong paddle and paddle themselves. You know, make them use the paddle on himself and some of them would paddle and cry.

This concludes my interview with James F. and Ivy B. Summers, both being retired school teachers. Their son, Stephen St. Clair Summers is also a retired school teacher, and their dauthter Bernice Chandler is the principal of an elementary school.